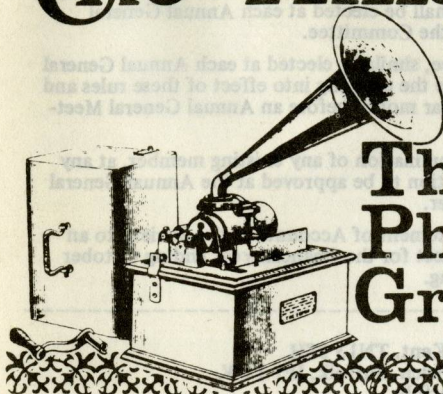


# The Hillandale News



The official journal of the  
**The City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society**  
inaugurated 1919

No. 93

DECEMBER 1976

*We wish all our members  
A Happy Christmas  
and good hunting  
in the  
New Year*





## SOCIETY RULES

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its members and the study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application.
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Secretary, Financial Treasurer and Meetings Secretary, who shall meet in Meeting in October, and who shall be ex-officio members of the Society.
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee of Management Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be to carry out the objects. Written notice must be given to the Secretary one month in advance of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the next meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription. The subscription Meeting, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a statement of account to the Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Sheet for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

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U.K.	£3.00 per year	U.S.A. & Canada	\$6.00 Surface Mail
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MEETINGS are held at the "John Snow" Public House, Broadwick Street, Soho, London, W.1, on the first MONDAY of every month commencing at 7.00 p.m. In addition, regular meetings are held at the following centres:

HEREFORD. Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [redacted] Tupsley, Hereford.  
 MIDLANDS. Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [redacted] Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [redacted]  
 MANCHESTER. Details from the Secretary, Clive Thompson, [redacted] Mosley Common, Worsley, Lancs.  
 VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. Details from C. Gracie, [redacted] Cavendish, Victoria 3408, Australia.  
 ZURICH, SWITZERLAND. Details from the Secretary, Herr W. Schenker, [redacted] Zurich, Switzerland.

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [redacted] Liverpool, L16 1LA.



## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

As 1977 approaches, the need for increased membership, which I have touched on before in this column, seems ever greater. We have to finance an exhibition, and to have a full stock of reprints and other publications available for sale at that exhibition. While it is hoped that sales of these, and also of the Exhibition Guide we are planning, will largely pay for the costs, we shall need capital to spend beforehand. A flood of new members in the New Year would go a long way to providing this, and I therefore urge all members to encourage anyone they know or meet who has an interest in talking machines or records to join the C.L.P.G.S. As mentioned in the A.G.M. minutes, sent out with the October Hillandale News, my introductory discount scheme for existing members enrolling newcomers provoked no response, but many people are encouraged to join by the discount available to all members on items in our Sales List.

I had intended reviewing a book in this issue, published by one of our American members. However, my cheque for the book in question was returned with a scribbled note on a piece cut from my letter, refusing to accept Sterling. Now I know that the Pound is going through a pretty hard time, but there is no need to insult my national pride in this way, and I concluded that if the publisher of a series of books on a specialised subject offers such offhand treatment to the Chairman of the world's oldest society devoted to that subject, then he is not interested in selling his books nor in fostering goodwill between collectors. I will say no more on the subject, beyond pointing out that we have many very good friends across the Atlantic, enthusiastic and knowledgeable collectors who are only too pleased to exchange information, and I am happy to be able to say that this particular piece of non-co-operation is an isolated instance.

## HILLANDALE NEWS INDEX

Various hardworking members have contributed indices for different sections of the "Hillandale News" over the years, and the last such index published, covering the first volumes, was sent out with the April 1975 issue. Unfortunately, the author's name was omitted from this, and we are therefore taking this opportunity to inform members that this was compiled by Ian Cosens, and to apologise to him for the omission.

Now Mr. Cosens has very kindly offered to bring the index up to date from the last one compiled by John McKeown, which covered issues to 1971. I mention this in case anyone else is doing the same thing; there is no point in producing duplicate indices!

## CENTENARY YEAR 1977

by The President

By the time this magazine reaches our letter-boxes, we shall be at the threshold of the New Year 1977, and for this Society a year to celebrate, for towards the end of 1877 Edison made the first successful talking machine, and we shall have every reason to mark this Centenary. From our plastic times, it seems incredible that someone hadn't thought of the idea before — well, we know of Leon Scott, Charles Cros and the rest, and no doubt the Russians could produce a contemporary pioneer, but Edison demonstrated the principle with the simplest of materials, and it is tribute enough to him that in spite of other forms of recording we are still



dragging a stylus along a groove as his first phonograph did, though of course the record has long since changed shape for convenience of manufacture and storage, to name but two advantages. Edison's cylinder though, still lingered until ten or fifteen years ago in many business offices.

Among the hundreds of tributes accorded him for his work on nearly every branch of Science, the Society's request to Edison to become its first President must be nearly at the bottom of the drawer — in fact he declined to be President but consented to being Patron of the London Edison Society, as it then was; in 1977 we shall have several opportunities to pay respect to this most remarkable of men. The Midlands Branch is having an Exhibition, probably at Birmingham, the Royal Scottish Museum will have a special display at the time of the Edinburgh Festival, and the London Science Museum towards the end of the year, and those present at the Annual General Meeting proposed that an Exhibition be held in the Capital. It is more than likely that television and radio will produce programmes on a subject that is tailor-made for vision and sound, and we do most sincerely hope that they will remember that the story of recording from Edison onwards is one of the most engrossing of all scientific tales and needs no gimmicks to add flavour for the uninitiated.

Additionally, if it would help, I would be pleased to act as a clearing centre for any information that the Branches of the Society or the museums involved in exhibitions can send me and pass it in the right direction, and will try and give them all support; our Chairman and Committee are going to have a great deal on their hands.

Whatever is going on in the world outside let's turn our thoughts and look ahead to 1977 being Edison Year, and make it a year for us all to remember!

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On a personal note, I was absolutely astounded and delighted on my election as an Honorary Member of the Society at the October Annual General Meeting. I would like to thank the Proposer and Seconder and the Meeting for confirming this. I can only add that, like most members, I have various memberships and activities outside, but to me no society fosters local friendships or worldwide contacts and a mature satisfaction than C.L.P.G.S. does, and I hope to be able to do what I can for many years yet. Has anyone thought ahead to a Society Diamond Jubilee Commemoration in 1979?

On a second personal point, there will be a book on the Edison Phonograph shortly; it's exacting work, hence it has taken so long, but in the words of the back-stage musicals "don't ring us, we'll ring you".

George Frow.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the first of a series of articles from several sources, that will be dealing with aspects of the career of Colonel G. E. Gouraud, Edison's Niagara-born Agent in the United Kingdom; it was at his home, Little Menlo, Upper Norwood, London, that this lady M.H.F. took employment as a governess, and in her spare moments as a Lady Type-writer. At the time of writing she has not been identified, but I think she may be the subject of the accompanying photograph taken at Little Menlo, and there is another taken there of the same person playing the piano. However this is not more than speculation at present.

The photographs may well have been made by C.R.C. Steytler, also employed at Edison House, London, as he was a keen amateur photographer and spent much time at Little Menlo.

George Frow.





**DICTATOR** — A word that has broadened in meaning since Colonel Gouraud posed for this picture, using a spectacle-type Edison Electric Phonograph.

Extract from **THE LADY** of August 23rd, 1888.

### **EDISON AND OUR DAUGHTERS**

Have we to thank America's great inventor for solving at last the mighty problem of "What shall we do with them?" I think we have. A remarkable experience of my own has at once thrust this question before me and enabled me to answer it, at least in some degree, and it is on behalf of these, "my sisters", that I have summoned up sufficient courage to write what is to me a tremendous undertaking — namely my first article to any paper.

Some time ago I was obliged (through misfortune as I thought) to support myself, and after vainly trying for several months to find work of any sort, and almost despairing of ever doing so, I had the good luck to get a situation as governess in a charming American family, with whom I have a most happy home. When I tell you that it is from this very house that the telephone and electric light first went forth to enlighten an incredulous England, and that the phonograph, the latest masterpiece of a master-mind, is amongst us, you will I think easily divine my whereabouts without my mentioning names.

Now, teaching is all very well; but even under the most advantageous circumstances it





**TYPE-WRITER** — A word originating from 1885, meaning the person who operated the machine. Here we see a lady type-writer using the early Edison Phonograph for secretarial work. It is thought that she may have been the writer of the accompanying article.

cannot be called a lucrative vocation, and like everything else in England, is overdone; so I thought I would just work away quietly and keep my eyes and ears open, and see if I could through the phonograph, about whose many virtues I heard so much, better my financial position.

There being a "typewriter" in the house for the use of a visiting secretary, I employed every spare moment in mastering the instrument. This I accomplished in a short time; the more easily perhaps because of my facility with the piano. I was soon able to write with greater rapidity than with a fairly rapid pen, and with far greater distinctness and condensation. Still, I was unable to utilise my accomplishment to the extent I had hoped (my ambition being to take the place of the occasional secretary), because of my ignorance of stenography. I therefore resolved, if possible, to acquire that art as well. How easy to resolve but how difficult to accomplish, all "my sisters" who have tried it will understand. Shall I confess that I failed? The time at my disposal was not sufficient, and the heart grew sick at the "hope deferred". When lo! one day there came an angel in disguise, with the magic aid of which I soon found myself "in the twinkling of an eye", or shall I say, ear?, an infallible stenographer, thanks to the genius of Edison, to whom I, and many like myself, shall be ever grateful.

The phonograph has at all events solved the problem for a small army of educated women.



Why "educated women" will appear later. It was my distinction to be the first woman in England to write with the type-writer from the phonograph's dictation the letter to the TIMES which heralded to the world the latest prodigious accomplishment of the "Wizard of Menlo Park". What a metamorphosis the phonograph has made in the sphere of my usefulness can be best understood when I say that I am now able to use to the fullest my knowledge of the type-writer, as I daily write out, all ready for signature, letter after letter (many of which may be spoken in the small hours of the night before) as the words roll forth from the otherwise silent machine. I find the invisible records awaiting me in the morning.

I place the phonogram in position, insert a small round plug in a small hole, hang a rubber tube to my ear, make a trifling adjustment with my fingers, after which there is nothing to do but write what I hear. My eyes and hands are free for their work; I don't even have to look at the phonograph until the letter is finished. The toe of my foot serves to regulate the speed of the phonograph's dictation, or, to be more precise, the number of words repeated at a time, one or a dozen, as the case may be. While I am writing I hear nothing. Should I have allowed the phonograph to speak too many words for me to remember, I have but to drop the weight of a finger upon a convenient spring, when a word or a sentence is repeated as often as I like. The manipulation of the phonograph is most simple — how simple will be understood when I say it requires far less teaching than does the sewing machine. I learnt all there is to learn in about half an hour.

Now to explain what I mean by "Educated women". And this is a most important point, though only within certain, and yet comparatively narrow, limits. Spelling; you must know how to spell. True, the phonograph will spell for all, and in my own experience I always find that when I come to proper names or unusual words they are spelled into the phonograph for me. This I am told, is also an invariable practice when dictating to expert stenographers, when it is desired to ensure perfect accuracy.

One word to explain my frequent reference to the type-writer. It is not essential to the phonograph; good handwriting is all that is necessary. I merely mentioned the type-writer as a more rapid and condensed method, and, as a rule, clearer than ordinary handwriting, the characters being in Roman type, from which it derives its name.

It will, of course, be understood that no higher standard of education will be required on the part of the lady phonographist than that required by the stenographer or any person competent to do secretarial work.

The observations with reference to spelling apply equally to the question of punctuation. The phonograph gives you natural oral punctuation, the same as in ordinary conversation; although some of the letters that I have had to transcribe, where the speaker into the phonograph wished to be very precise with regard to punctuation, and to prevent the possibility of any deviation from his wishes in this respect, he has actually dictated his punctuation into the machine, which has in turn called out to me, "comma, colon, or period," or, as the case might be, "new paragraph, hyphen, parenthesis, mark of exclamation or interrogation."

The whole thing is so thoroughly practical and time-saving to the brain-workers — and mind, I speak from experience — that it must certainly come to pass that in the commercial centre of every town, where time is money, and where the rich or idle can afford the luxury, offices will be established entirely officered by ladies, where phonograms may be sent for transcription by type-writers or pen, and from which offices both phonographs and phonographists will be sent for temporary or regular employment upon a scale of remuneration which, while it may be small to those who pay, will make prosperous and comfortable those who serve.



All this may seem very strange - indeed incredible - to all who have not had the privilege, as I have, of seeing, hearing and using this modern miracle; but this small monopoly will not long be mine, and I shall be greatly surprised if I have not proved myself a prophet in predicting in the near future a new sphere of employment for gentlewomen, at once agreeable, refined, improving and profitable.

M.H.F. (The First English Lady Phonographist).

## OBSERVATIONS UPON THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As members will already have seen the report of the proceedings of the business side of the Annual General Meeting of the Society, held in October, I do not propose here to deal with those again, but to report on the social activities which also formed part of the day.

Prior to the meeting proper, executive officers and committee members met for an informal discussion on various subjects in a room at the "Eccentrics Club", kindly provided by its Secretary, our committee member, John McKeown. After a break for lunch, John then proceeded to another room in which the business meeting of the Society was to be held, and he there proceeded to demonstrate a few of the many disc machines and Gramophones which he had on display. This was most enjoyable as the machines were in tip-top condition, thus enabling comparison of performances to be evaluated. Some of us had been fortunate enough to attend at a similar demonstration given by John earlier on in the year.

At 3 p.m. the Annual General Meeting was brought into session by the retiring Hon. Chairman, Mr. Christopher Proudfoot.

At the conclusion, we all retired to a dining room wherein our new Hon. Secretary, John McKeown, provided us with a sandwich and salad tea, which was most welcome.

The next item on the agenda was a demonstration by our new Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gordon Ives, of the machine tools which he had designed and put into use for the manufacture of Model C Edison phonograph reproducers which he has recently brought into production. Mr. Ives conveyed to his attentive audience the snags and difficulties he had encountered not only in the tooling up processes but also in the actual manufacturing processes of the parts and the close watch that had to be kept on tolerances so that, with the final assembly as a reproducer, enough allowances had been made for all the essential parts to fit in a proper manner, without there being too much freedom or restriction of movement. Tool posts, dies, press tools, blank strips and rods, and stamping tools were all on display, and the demonstration ended with a reproduction from an "Ives" reproducer and an original Edison. The audience were asked to choose the better of the two, without any knowledge as to which one they were listening to. It was unanimous that one was superior to the other, and this turned out to be Mr. Ives' own construction, but as he pointed out, the Edison reproducer was an old one and the condition of the sapphire point was not known. Mr. Ives' repro' was fitted with a glass stylus. Mr. Ives' workshop drawings were produced by taking the dimensions of an Edison original, and one could construe from many of our demonstrator's remarks, that the whole project had been somewhat a "voyage of discovery" into Edisonian mechanics, and that besides having the satisfaction of actually reproducing an Edison product, he had furthered his mechanical and engineering experience thereby.

After this enjoyable affair, Mr. Barry Williamson, our re-elected Hon. Treasurer from Liverpool, gave a short recital of records via the gramophones of John McKeown, who operated his own



machines. Barry used his discs to relate his own experiences which he had passed through with regard to his likes and dislikes in music especially with regard to the influences that his family circle, radio and the gramophone record had had upon him. We heard comedy songs, comedians, jazz, and concert ballads in his short programme which was given in an affable and humorous vein.

After the usual applause and a vote of thanks, members began conversations or inspected John McKeown's machines, but I, having been at the Eccentrics Club eight hours, left for home, after one of the most enjoyable A.G.M.'s I have attended.

H. Frank Andrews.

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

St. Andrew's, Fife.

Readers of "Hillandale" may be interested to know that I have published an article in "Hi-Fi News & Record Review Annual 1977" about playing 78's on modern equipment. The article is entitled "Higher Fidelity from old records".

After some mention of historical facts which bear upon the problems of playing 78's, I describe how some of the **modern** pitfalls may be avoided, and also how to make some complementary tone correction for the acoustic recording process.

Peter Adamson.

## C A R R I E T U B B

by Len Watts

The death occurred on September 20th of the soprano, Miss Carrie Tubb. She must surely have been the last remaining of the early recording artists. She had reached the advanced age of 100, and was interviewed on her birthday last May for the Sunday morning Music Magazine program on the radio. Readers will remember also she appeared on Roy Plumley's Desert Island Discs some 6 years ago.

Caroline Tubb, a Londoner, was born on 17th May, 1876. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music, and in later life taught therefor nearly 30 years. She had the honour of singing at Sandringham before King Edward VIIth, and Queen Alexandra, and was soon in demand as an oratorio singer, and particularly excelled in "Elijah" and "The Golden Legend" (Sullivan).

She also appeared at Covent Garden in 1910, at the invitation of Sir Thomas Beecham, and roles included several of the well-known operas. Sir Henry Wood also enticed her to the Proms, where she specialised in Wagner. She appeared with Melchior at his Prom debut in 1923.

Although she retired from singing about 1930, she was still to be seen attending the English National Opera's Ring productions in the seventies.

We in this Society know her from her records. It seems strange that she should have said to Roy Plumley in her Desert Island Discs interview that she didn't remember anything about making records. The present writer has seen His Master's Voice catalogs going back only to 1920, so perhaps some kind reader could fill in more details of Miss Tubb's records for this label, but being a researcher into the activities of Pathé Freres, this writer has unearthed 22 discs she made for that Company.

Records for His Master's Voice, traced from a 1920 catalog. Carrie Tubb appears on one side



only of each disc, so the reverse is not given here.

- C447 (03278) The Valley of Laughter (Sanderson).  
 C458 (04024) Hymn of Praise, I waited for the Lord (Mendelssohn), duet with Perceval Allen.  
 C484 Elijah, O Lord Thou hast overthrown (Mendelssohn), duet with Peter Dawson.  
 B385 Elijah, Lift thine eyes (Mendelssohn) with Eleanor Jones-Hudson, Florence Venning and Ernest Pike.

Records for Pathé Freres, with issue dates.

14-inch

- 2064, 79498 Ave Maria (Gounod).  
       79499 Speak from your Heaven Beloved (Chevalier). March, 1912.  
 2103, 79798 Hear my Prayer (Mendelssohn).  
       79799 The Golden Legend, The Night is Calm and Cloudless (Sullivan). Nov. 1912.  
 2147, 92170 Tannhauser, Duet Act 1 (Wagner).  
       92171 Tannhauser, Duet Act 2 (Wagner).  
       Both duets with William Boland. October, 1913.  
 2205, 93044 Elijah, Hear ye Israel (Mendelssohn).  
       93045 Messiah, Rejoice greatly (Handel). March 1914.

11-inch

- 87, 79107 Dear Heart (Tito Mattei).  
       79110 She wandered down the mountain-side (Clay). September 1911.  
 497, 79286/1 Oberon, Ocean thou mighty monster, Part 1.  
       79286/2 Oberon, Ocean thou mighty monster, Part 2. September, 1911.  
 568, 79111 The Land of Love (Oliver).  
       79112 The Valley of Laughter (Sanderson). September, 1911.  
       Song cycle especially written for Miss Tubb by Herbert Oliver, "Songs of Old London".  
 5199, 79651 London Spring-song/May-day at Islington.  
       79652 Buy my strawberries. May, 1912.  
 5200, 79653 Down Vauxhall Way.  
       79654 The Nightingales of Lincoln's Inn May, 1912.

There is a mystery surrounding these last two discs. The writer has two copies of these. One set has orchestral accompaniment and is a 1912 pressing, but the other set is piano-accompanied and is a 1915 pressing. The catalog and master numbers are identical (although not the stamper numbers of course). A September 1916 catalog has been seen, but there is no mention of these piano-accompanied discs. It would not be surprising to find the accompanist is Herbert Oliver himself, as he accompanied these songs for Columbia about the same time (although for another singer).

- 5244, 79830 The bonny blue kerchief (Barnicott).  
       79831 Three green bonnets (d'Hardelot). June, 1912.  
 5274, 79940 Our Land of Dreams (Thompson).  
       79941 The sunshine of your eyes (Thompson). October 1912.



Song cycle, Songs of Merrie England (Herbert Oliver).

5481, 92793 Red Rose of England.

92794 Gretna Green.

October, 1913.

Song cycle, The Valley of Dreams (V. Thomas).

5482 Night in the Valley.

The Valley/After the night, the dawn.

April, 1914.

5483 The Dancing-lesson (Herbert Oliver).

An Emblem (Jack Thompson).

January, 1914.

5484 The Danza (Chadwick).

Dream Waltz (Arensky).

December, 1913.

5485 Cowslips & clover (Trevalsa).

The Nightingale (Robert Batten).

February, 1914.

5486, 92205 Queen of the Roses (Herbert Oliver).

92206 Lilac Time (Willeby).

November, 1913.

5574 Songs my mother taught me (Dvorak).

Your heart will call me home (Tate).

July, 1914.

We regret that we haven't traced the master numbers of these later discs. If any kind member can supply these, anonymously if preferred, it would be greatly appreciated.

10-inch

8114, 78067 Dollar Princess, Many a lover (Fall).

Reverse not Tubb.

November 1909.

8118, 78065 Dollar Princess, The riding-lesson (Fall).

78066 Dollar Princess, Reminiscences (Fall).

Both duets with Philip Ritte.

October, 1909.

Diamond Record

O.42 Your Heart.....from 5574 above.

The sunshine of.....from 5274 above.

As readers will be aware, Pathé Freres had a system of transferring their recordings from one medium to another. Many of the above-listed etched-label records were re-issued on paper-label edge-start discs after the war, as follows:—

Rooster Label. This label (so termed by the makers) had a white, red or golden cockerel, according to the price-range, and the words "Pathé Disc" around the top. Issue date about October 1918, and was short-lived, as the Company was re-formed into Pathé Freres Pathéphone Ltd. in 1919.

20419, as 87 above.

20420, as 497 above.

20421, as 568.

20422, as 5199, although which version has not been determined.

20423, as 5200.

Scroll-label (Pathé Freres Pathéphone Ltd.)

All with red scroll.

5426, as 87, issued September 1920.

5533, as 497, issued September 1920.



5665, as 2103, issued November 1922.

5695, Messiah side from 2205.

Speak side from 2064. Issued April 1922.

P.S. As Carrie Tubb seems to be associated with so many of Herbert Oliver's songs, perhaps he was her husband? Len Watts.

## 'THE PHONOGRAPHIC NEWS' AND THE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The most important news to come from "down under", is that the above Society has issued its first facsimile reprint.

This is the booklet "Operation and Care of the Edison Phonograph" as published by Thomas A. Edison, Inc. of Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A. Printed in the U.S.A., it bears a printer's mark of "9-25", which I take to mean September 1925.

The phonograph is a disc playing phonograph for Edison Re-creation Discs (Diamond Discs), and not a cylinder phonograph.

The booklet has a deep ochre and black printed cover and contains sixteen pages of text, including line illustrations of the activating components.

I have not been given any price or cost of packaging and postage.

It is remiss of the South Australian Society not to have indicated on its reprint that it is, in fact, a reprint!

"The Phonographic News" has reached No. 3 in Volume 2. The front cover shows a Pathé "Coquette" phonograph with mandrel adaptor and standard and salon size cylinder boxes. Other illustrations include an advertisement for "Masterphone" gramophones, Tins of needles of Australian manufacture, Needle Tins from the Editor's (Dr. Garry Scroop) own collection, a full length photograph of Marie Rappold, A Dealer's advertisement for a "New" "H.M.V." Gramophone, an advertisement for the Australian made Fletcher-Wickes tone-arm, and a Columbia Grafanola "puff" advertisement from the South Australian Phonograph Company.

The Editorial comments on a meeting with Peter Burgiss, who, with Mike Sutcliffe, is preparing a historical survey of the Talking Machine in continental Australasia, and again brings forward the subject of museums.

An article on the Talking Machine in South Australia in 1906.

Mr. Will Andrew continues his survey of the Edison Diamond Disc.

A "What's your Problem?" feature, and an article by Frank Puls on the Telephone Centenary Stamp issues.

The magazine comes with membership of the Society, which is 12 Australian dollars per annum. Send to M. Bull, Hon. Secy., [REDACTED] Prospect, South Australia, 5082.

The next issue is to contain a comprehensive history of one of South Australia's talking machine companies, written by an 83 year old gentleman who founded the business, who has kept much of his company's printed matter.

F.A.

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Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies  
University of London  
Vol 32 Pt 2 1969

## EMPEROR MENELIK'S PHONOGRAPH MESSAGE TO QUEEN VICTORIA<sup>1</sup>

By ABRAHAM DEMOZ

In 1898 Queen Victoria sent a recording of her voice to the Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia and his Queen, Itege Taitu, together with some phonograph apparatus. The following year Menelik and Taitu returned the compliment by making recordings of their voices and sending them to Queen Victoria. The latter recordings have been preserved in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle,<sup>2</sup> but Queen Victoria's recording was later destroyed on her instructions. The text of her message has, however, been preserved and is reproduced here. The message was dated Osborne, 8 August 1898:

'I, Victoria, Queen of England, hope your Majesty is in good health. I thank you for the kind reception which you have given to my Envoys, Mr. Rodd<sup>3</sup> and Mr. Harrington.<sup>4</sup> I wish your Majesty and the Empress Taitou all prosperity and success, and I hope that the friendship between our two Empires will constantly increase'.<sup>5</sup>

The Emperor and the Queen seem to have been very impressed by the recorded message, if we are to judge from an account given in a letter from Harrington to the Marquis of Salisbury, dated Addis Ababa, 5 November 1898. Harrington describes how the recording was first submitted to M. Ilg, the Emperor's Swiss adviser, who examined the enclosed credentials attesting that it was a recording of Queen Victoria's voice. Harrington then tested it and delivered it to Emperor Menelik:

'The message was received with ceremony by the King, and after it was delivered, an artillery salute was fired, the King standing to show his respect for the honour paid him.

The King heard the message several times, and expressed his thanks for the honour paid him by her Majesty, more especially because, having tried speaking into a phonograph himself, he thoroughly realised the trouble that her Majesty must have taken in sending the message. He said that, hearing



her Majesty's voice. he felt as if they were face to face, and he said that, should he ever go to Europe, his first business would be to see her Majesty in person.

I then left the phonograph to allow His Majesty to have the message repeated to Queen Taitou. M. Ilg informed me that Queen Taitou recognised her own name in the message, and said, "She says my name." Queen Taitou asked if she could have a life of the Queen. I was also informed that the King took the opportunity of again listening to her Majesty's message several times, and expressed his surprise that her Majesty's voice at her age should be so firm and distinct.

The cylinder was then returned to me and immediately broken into pieces as promised. Owing to the fact that the disc of the recording stylus was unfortunately broken *en route*, I was unable to accept King Menelik's return message for her Majesty, but he has promised to speak a message as soon as I receive a new recorder, which has been written for'.<sup>6</sup>

The phonograph itself must also have been of considerable interest to Menelik, as he had an abiding concern with the achievements of Western technology in general. When, in 1907, the Englishman Bede Bentley brought the first motor car ever to come to Addis Ababa, Menelik talked to him 'for nearly two hours about cars, traction engines, railways, guns and phonographs' and the Empress asked Bentley 'to repair her home cinema apparatus'.<sup>7</sup>

The new recorder which had been sent for finally arrived, and Menelik and Taitu were thus able to record their messages and to send them to the Queen. Unfortunately, neither an English translation of these recordings nor the Amharic original text, if it ever existed, is now available. It has, therefore, been necessary for me to establish first an Amharic text by listening to these recordings and then to make an English translation on that basis.

The quality of the recordings is undoubtedly quite poor by present standards but rather impressive when one considers that recording technology was at that time still in its early infancy.<sup>8</sup> Many repeated hearings, both of the original cylinder and of a tape recording made from it, were required before satisfactory texts of Menelik's and Taitu's messages could be established.<sup>9</sup> Even then two words remained unidentified in Taitu's message.

Nevertheless, even from a recording of this quality it was not difficult to determine that Emperor Menelik had a strong resonant voice. His pronunciation does not show any significant variation from that of a modern Amharic speaker of comparable background. Itege Taitu had a pleasant voice and a cultivated manner of speech. They both seemed to be reading from written texts rather than speaking extempore.



Menelik's message contains a reference to the problem of the town of Matamma on the Ethiopia-Sudan frontier which at that time was in dispute.<sup>10</sup> The two messages also present some items of linguistic interest which will be referred to below.

The Queen's reception of these two messages is recorded in an entry in her journal dated Osborne, 18 August 1899. Her reaction to them was curt and somewhat ungenerous, especially when compared to the elaborate and very favourable reception that Emperor Menelik gave to her message :

' Captain Harrington, my agent in Abyssinia, brought a phonograph message from the Emperor Menelek and the Empress Taitou, which I listened to, and the translation of which was read to me. It was very curious '.<sup>11</sup> We must of course consider the possibility that a poor translation could have helped to render the messages ' very curious ' to Her Majesty's ears apart from some lack of comprehension owing to cultural differences.<sup>12</sup>

## I

I, Menelik II, king of kings of Ethiopia, say to our very honoured <sup>13</sup> friend Victoria, Queen of the great English people,<sup>14</sup> ' May the Saviour of the World give you health ! '

When the very beautiful and excellent phonograph (recording) of the Queen reached me <sup>15</sup> by the hands of Monsieur Harrington and when I heard the voice of Your Majesty <sup>16</sup> (as if) you were beside me, I listened with great pleasure.

May God thank <sup>17</sup> you for your good wishes for us and for my kingdom. May God give you long life and health and give your people peace and repose.

I have spoken with M. Harrington concerning all issues between both our peoples. When he told me that he was now returning to England, I said to him that I would be pleased if he could settle all our affairs before coming back. And now, may the Queen receive him well.

Furthermore, we have told M. Harrington about Matamma, how our great king <sup>18</sup> and many of our compatriots died there for their religious zeal.<sup>19</sup> I have hopes that you will help us in having the English government recognize this city for us.<sup>20</sup>

May God help us that Ethiopia and England may remain in peace and friendship. Having said this, I extend my greetings of respect to your great people.

## II

I, Itege Taitu, Light of Ethiopia,<sup>21</sup> say to <sup>22</sup> the very honoured Queen



Victoria, the great Queen of the English...<sup>23</sup> May God give you health. Your phonograph has reached me. With great pleasure I listened to you (as if) you were beside me. And now, since God has willed to bring my voice to the ear of the honoured Queen, I declare<sup>24</sup>... that God give you health and long life.

May God keep you many years in good health.

<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge, gratefully, the gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to play the phonograph cylinders and to publish the messages contained in them.

<sup>2</sup> The recordings were brought to my attention by Professor E. Ullendorff to whom I am most grateful. [Acknowledgements and thanks are due to Mr. Robert Mackworth-Young, M.V.O., Her Majesty's Librarian, who wrote to me about these cylinders in March 1967 and has since been most helpful in all the arrangements leading eventually to the publication of this article. *Edward Ullendorff*.]

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Rennell Rodd was the leader of the mission that negotiated a treaty between Ethiopia and Britain in 1897. See H. G. Marcus, 'The Rodd mission of 1897', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, III, 2, 1965, and E. Ullendorff, 'The 1897 treaty between Great Britain and Ethiopia', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, XXII, 1966, 116-34.

<sup>4</sup> Lt.-Col. John Lane Harrington, previously consular officer at Zeila, was appointed in November 1897 to be the British Agent in Ethiopia (cf. E. Ullendorff, 'The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902', *BSOAS*, xxx, 3, 1967, 641-54.)

<sup>5</sup> From *Letters of Queen Victoria. Third series, 1886-1901*, III, London, 1932, 263.

VOL. XXXII. PART 2.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 310-11.

<sup>7</sup> T. R. Nicholson, *A toy for the Lion*, London, 1965, 121.

<sup>8</sup> Although the first crude recording machine was constructed by Thomas A. Edison as early as 1877, it was not until 1888 that an improved phonograph, suitable for production on a commercial basis, was first exhibited. The improvement included, among other things, the use of wax on the recording surface of the cylinder rather than tinfoil as previously (see V. K. Chew, *Talking machines*, London, HMSO, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> The cylinders had to be played at the Science Museum in London on one of the instruments in their unique and extensive collection. My sincere thanks are due to Mr. V. K. Chew of the Science Museum for his indispensable help in making it possible for me to hear the recordings played many times over. [The quality of the recordings is such that at times I found it hard to establish even the identity of the language. Dr. Abraham Demoz deserves much credit for his acumen and perseverance. *Edward Ullendorff*.]

<sup>10</sup> See H. G. Marcus, 'Ethio-British negotiations concerning the western border with Sudan, 1896-1902', *Journal of African History*, iv, 1, 1963, 81-94; E. Ullendorff, *BSOAS*, xxx, 3, 1967.

<sup>11</sup> *Letters of Queen Victoria. Third series*, III, 394.

<sup>12</sup> [Dr. Abraham Demoz does not, perhaps, make full allowances for the flavour of the term 'curious' in the Queen's vocabulary which appears to have connoted a mixture of 'interest' and 'strangeness'. *Edward Ullendorff*.]

<sup>13</sup> In current Amharic a monarch would not be referred to by the term የከበሩ but rather by ገርግዩ(ት)

<sup>14</sup> There is a clear hesitation in Menelik's reading at this point. He says: የእንግሊዝ ሕዝብ : (hesitation) የሕዝብ : ነገሥታት ።. He was obviously misreading his text because the phrase as it stands does not make sense. Could the text have read የእንግሊዝ ሕዝብ : ንግሥተ : ነገሥታት :? If so, the translation would be '... Victoria, Empress of the English people'. In some other documents (see, for instance, Ullendorff, *RSE*, xxii, 1966, 127)







in slightly damp conditions in a loft or attic, will show similar signs of carbonation after a long period? This may in turn encourage moulds to thrive, but there I step out of my depth. Cylinders stored in houses that have always been well lived-in and not allowed to get damp usually show least signs of spots or bloom, particularly if on pegs and not in contact with flannel wrapping.

I offer the above in the hope that one of our members of technical bent will take this up, and supply a definitive answer, cure or no. A warning to newer members that can never be repeated too much is that they should NEVER buy mouldy or spotty wax cylinders on the vendor's recommendation that "they will clean up with a cloth when you get home". It is too late then.

On an entirely different subject, I have seen the new reprint from the Vintage Light Music Society, which should appeal to most collectors of British and International artists. It is a booklet on the Hastings and St. Leonards Municipal Orchestra (who made records for Decca) and whose conductors were Basil Cameron followed by Julius Harrison, and is a history of the Orchestra with its programme for the year 1930/1. "Small beer indeed!" you will say perhaps, but here was a permanent provincial orchestra of 33 players — augmented when necessary — involving itself with conductors and performers of international repute; Hamilton Harty, Henry Wood, Heddle Nash, Elisabeth Schumann, Suggia, Lamond, Harold Samuel and two or three score of well-known singers of the day, some of whom are still around and teaching. The photographs are far from crystal sharp, but to produce a booklet of twenty-six pages for 30p. post free deserves commendation; send postal orders to Stuart Upton, [REDACTED] West Wickham, Kent, England, and I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

## LONG-PLAY CYLINDER RECORDS !!

Some observations by Sydney H. Carter



With his great inventive skill and vast manufacturing resources, I am surprised that Thomas A. Edison did not produce a 5 inch long-play cylinder record in 1908-9, when introducing the 4 minute AMBEROL record, to play upon the Edison CONCERT, the Edison Bell DUPLEX and NEW DUPLEX Models.

The standard 2-1/8" diameter AMBEROL cylinder has 200 t.p.i. and approximately 6.8 ins. of sound track per revolution.

At 160 r.p.m. this provides 1088 ins. of recorded sound per minute.

Applying this to a 5 inch cylinder (say 5 1/4 in. diameter) which has 16.5 ins. of track per revolution, the speed can be reduced to 65 r.p.m. to provide THE SAME QUALITY OF REPRODUCTION.

This gives a playing time of 9.7 minutes, or if the speed is slightly reduced from 65 to 60 r.p.m., a time of



10½ minutes — sufficient for the playing of many Overtures, complete movements of favorite Symphonies, Concertos, etc.

Just think what this would have meant to the popularity of the Phonograph, at a time (1909) when the maximum playing time of ANY disc record was no more than 4 minutes!

How curious that it was never thought of!

P.S. And, of course, the CONSISTENT quality of reproduction from the beginning to the end of the sound track which ONLY the Phonograph can provide.

## PAPER AND THINGS

by George L. Frow

It has to be a good cause to get me up to London these days, but an auction of phonographs and gramophones is as good a reason as any, particularly where there were one or two items of great historic interest there; these were cylinders recorded by Tennyson and lesser mortals and cut by Edison representatives over here in the early nineties.

Afterwards I had a brief opportunity to speak to Bennett Maxwell, who has a profound knowledge of the personalities in the recording and recorded world of those times, and whose biography of one in particular is awaited. He told me that practically all the early speech cylinders mentioned by students and biographies of those days have turned up and have been carefully copied by the B.B.C. using special equipment. One of the problems with such material of course is to present it to the public in assimilable doses — speech after speech, however perfect or historic has to be rationed and fashioned into a listenable half-hour or so, but when the recording is eighty or ninety years old the programme really only reaches dedicated ears — a great pity but a fact of life. Anyhow it is certain that Bennett Maxwell will give us a chance to hear some of them in 1977.

The day following I viewed Joe Pengelly on the television showing us the results of his electrical reproduction from cylinders, playing firstly Blue Amberols on a HOME with Model H, then the same on an OPERA with electrical pick-up and amplification. He played a Peter Dawson followed by a bell solo, and though I think the comparison was remarkable, the Model H Reproducer with 14 in. brass horn could not be expected to set much of a standard to begin with, and I would have preferred to have heard both on the OPERA. This was a general programme however and the uninformed had to be considered; there's no getting away from it that the electrical reproduction was quite startling and has been acclaimed among the cognoscenti, and perhaps this system could give us some L.P. discs in the coming months. Joe invited viewers to scour their lofts for any cylinders of Queen Victoria — at first sounding that seems just beyond reach, like Jenny Lind — then I remembered that Bennett Maxwell had brushed aside many of the cobwebs. Personally I would be quite content to hear some black or brown-wax cylinders of interesting subjects in really fine condition resuscitated by Joe's system.

## A THIRD MEETING WITH ARCHIMEDES (ARCHIE) GREENHORN

At a Record Bazaar a few months ago.

"Ah, Mr. Andrews, there you are, I must have missed you at previous bazaars; did you attend?"

(continued on page 72)







The Great EDISON - BELL Gridword

If you solve the above crossword correctly; and transfer the letters into the GRID, it will tell you something you already knew (or should do!) One word is already inserted in each part to show how easy it is!

T H E	E14 A20 F4	B4	C23 E23 B19	A6	D7 D21	F9	A9	D12 D19	B22 D4	T H E
B6	F24 D26 F2	E9	A2 A24 D10	O F	T H E	E19 D24	A8 D3	O F	E21 F5 E16 F12 A14 C4	
F23	F7	B20 D15 B3	E5	A10 D6	C22 C2	C11 F20	D8 A5	A23 F6	C25 E10 D25 E25	
A7	A23 B13 B24	C12	D9	E20 I T	A22 C6	D20 A1	F8 B21	E6 C9	A21 E7 B11 F16	
C7	A19 B12 C14	C20 B26	AND HIS TEAM	B8 D14	E17 F25	D5 F13	C8 T H E	F19 D13 E3	A3 B14	
E D I S O N	E13 F21 F26	B2	C24 A15 D1	C16 D23	D2 D16	A16 E15 F3	E24 C26 D22		8	
	E26 E4	F1	D17 E12 C18 B5	F14	A17 B16	B15 F18	A11 B25 C17 E11	C5 E22 D9		
W A S	C13 B9	A25 F10	B7 B17	T H E M	C19 B23	T H E	C3 A26	F15	1 8 7 7	
										W E R

THE ANSWER WILL BE PRINTED IN THE FEBRUARY, 1977, ISSUE.



### A THIRD MEETING WITH ARCHIMEDES (ARCHIE) GREENHORN (cont. from page 69).

"Yes, I went to the one at Clapham. I had to pay to enter the thing — I haven't recovered from the shock yet! Well, Archie, I suppose you are about to ply me with more questions?"

"That's right," he replied, "you may remember you told me that when we next met you were going to talk about the first company to use wax for disc masters."

"A fault with me is that I have a habit of opening my mouth too wide. 'Talks too much' was always on my school reports."

"So you don't really know, when it comes down to it?" Archie asked accusingly.

I admitted this was so, which meant the question could now be discussed for hours without any end result.

"But you must have some idea", suggested Greenhorn.

"Yes, well, let me review what is known, or what is believed to be known, for so much of what has been written in the past has been found to be wrong that one has to tread warily. As I have remarked to you before, the patent for cutting into wax was with the American Graphophone Company, the manufacturers for the Columbia Phonograph Company, Gen'l."

"But you told me they only used their patented process for wax cylinder records," interjected Archie, "and that they bought the later J. Jones patent for their discs."

"Correct." I said. "Now the Berliner Gramophone Company of the U.S.A. was in business with their acid etched masters by the end of 1895, and were prevented from using wax, even if they knew the technique at that time, for making disc masters because of the invention being patented."

"Surely the Columbia Phonograph Company, Gen'l was first then, or did others try their hands at it first?"

"That is exactly what has to be answered, although I don't believe it was Columbia. There is a complication because, given that hard disc records were already in existence, — the Berliner's, — and given the fact that the process of turning a wax master into a metal master for stamping was known, there would appear to have been nothing to stop anyone from procuring a freshly pressed Berliner disc, then make a wax impression from that and, from that, make a metal stamper and manufacture discs from that. Thus one would have new wax process records made from etched recordings."

"Did this occur? Wasn't it against the law?"

"There is conclusive evidence that this did occur, but exactly when, for the first time, I cannot say."

"Well, who were these people who did such things?"

"That is a question that will have to be answered by researchers in America, mainly through any Court actions which ensued over the business of duplicating records. In America proceedings of this nature were usually brought as "Bills in Equity". We used to have such proceedings here in England until 1873 when the Judicature Act was passed which amalgamated the Courts of Law and Equity into the Supreme Court of Judicature. The point is that recording was a new phenomena as far as the Courts of both countries were concerned and there were no precedents on which to move in the early instances of duplicating and pirating. Once wax could be used for cutting discs or impressing discs some people felt free to do so. With cylinder records, which were made of a wax-like substance anyway, duplication became rife, not only as a means of mass production, but also unethically for copying other companies' records. When



the gold moulded process arrived, the bigger companies who could afford to equip themselves for the process no longer had need of the duplication processes then in use, but the smaller companies and one man businesses still continued to duplicate their own master cylinders or else used other manufacturer's cylinders as masters."

"You have drifted from the point".

"I was attempting to set the background to the problems of duplication. Now I consider there were at least four contenders who could possibly have been first in having put on sale records pressed from wax masters, and these were:

- (1) The National Gramophone Corporation/(formerly Company) with the Zon-o-phone Record.
- (2) The American Talking Machine Company with the Vitaphone Disk Record — Process J. W. Jones.
- (3) The Consolidated Talking Machine Co., proprietor Eldridge R. Johnson, with his discs which were finally styled Victor Records, and
- (4) The Globe Record Co. with the Climax Record."

"And who do you consider was first?"

"I have no idea. I have been told by collectors that they have discs which were made by, or for, the 'Zonophone' company in the U.S.A., but which have no markings on their faces as to label style, one of which is known to be a Berliner recording. There is court evidence that Berliner records were subjected to a process of having their name style removed by the National Gramophone Corporation, but whether as finished discs, or as a preparatory move to procure stampers for subsequent pressings I do not know. If the latter, this raises the interesting speculation as to whether or not such a procedure actually infringed the cutting into wax patent, if all that had been done was the pressing of an ordinary acid etched made disc into a wax tablet in order to procure a wax master, for no cutting, engraving, gouging, or incising would be involved."

"I know," said Archie, "that the National Gramophone Corporation were licensed by the American Graphophone Company in 1900 to manufacture Zonophones, but did they make wax masters for their Zon-o-phone Records before that?"

"Again I don't know, but I feel almost sure that the Vitaphone Disk records made under the J. W. Jones process were wax mastered, for that is what Jones's process was! Jones is the man who patented his wax process after, it is alleged, he had observed Berliner and Johnson's experiments — and this was the process which the American Graphophone Company bought in their attempt to monopolise the disc market."

"You have told me of this before."

"I know, but the American Talking Machine Company, had been producing these Vitaphone Disks before the sale of Jones's patent. They too had been licensed by the American Graphophone Company, who themselves were not yet into discs. Now the Vitaphone Disks had been accused of being nothing more than 'quadruplicates' of the Berliner discs of the Berliner Gramophone Company. This was strongly denied by the American Talking Machine Company and a reward was offered for the names of the perpetrators of such accusations."

"So the Vitaphone Disks were newly recorded on to wax," asked Archie.

"Only tests by simultaneously playing Berliner, Zon-o-phone and Vitaphone discs with similar titles and artists will prove this, but as Vitaphone Disks are extremely rare, seeing that they probably demised with the sale of Jones's patent, there is small likelihood of such tests being undertaken."



"What about the Consolidated records of Eldridge R. Johnson?"

'Ah! Now Johnson knew how to cut into wax as we know from the experimental double sided discs which came as a result of Berliner and Johnson's experiments, discs which, perhaps, were never on sale. As you know, the Berliner company were enjoined by the American courts from carrying on business in machines and discs because of their alleged infringement of patents, other than the wax patent, belonging to the American Graphophone Company, but that is another story."

"One thing I do not understand is this. If Berliner was stopped in America by the Graphophone's Company's patents, why was the Gramophone Company here not stopped by the same Graphophone patents which belonged to the Edison Bell company?"

"Well, that again is another story and to tell that will take me clear away from the point of master discs made by cutting into wax. Now Johnson and/or Berliner at the time of their experiments with wax, never applied for a patent because of the Bell/Tainter patent belonging to the American Graphophone Company, although Johnson was granted a patent when he did apply some time later. His first recordings in 1900, which later became 'Victor' records, are thought to have been only from wax cut masters."

"What about the fourth contender for first with wax master discs, the Globe Record Company? I have read about this company with its 'Climax' discs; there is very little known about this business?"

"That is true," I agreed, "but recent research in America has thrown a great deal more light on this quite important company, yet as I do not wish to anticipate the Americans I will not say much about the Climax Records except to mention that the label was the property of at least three enterprises during its short life, the Columbia Phonograph Co., Gen'l, being the third and last, for, as you know, many of the Climax Records were retained by Columbia and the record numbers were the foundation of the Columbia discs when they appeared in 1902 with black and silver labels."

"The early Climax records were without labels, weren't they? Were they wax cut?"

"yes, unlabelled Climax records turn up as well as labelled ones, which bear the original markings underneath the labels. As to whether they were all originally wax-cut, or whether 'dub-bings' from Berliners and/or Zon-o-phones were included I cannot say."

"Was there any other likely contender?"

"There may have been. Let us remember that we are dealing with the years 1899 to 1901 inclusive, and besides the Berliner, Zon-o-phone, E.R. Johnson Consolidated discs and the Climaxes, another disc was advertised accompanying a machine styled 'The Discophone' from the Hawthorne and Sheble company. I know of no name style for the discs, they may have been sub-contracted from one of the other 'labels', but if they were not, if they were own recordings, then they too may be in contention for being the first 'wax cut' mastered discs."

"For a hobby which, I suppose, has been in existence since the very first issues of recordings to the general public, it seems to me," observed Archie, "that there remains a vast amount of unknown data about recordings and the industry in general. Are there any other outstanding questions still waiting to be resolved?"

"Off hand I can think of one to which I cannot provide an answer, although it may be that the answer is already known."

"And what is that?"

"Who was the first to put a paper label on a disc, instead of marking the record physically?"



"That is not known then?"

"If it is, I am not aware of what the truth of the matter is; I think it lies between Climax and Zon-o-phone, I have not heard of paper labelled Berliners or Vitaphones."

"By the way, the book 'From Tin Foil to Stereo' is available again and I would just like to mention that the authors of the book, in dealing with Jos. W. Jones ascribe his visit to Europe as on behalf of Zon-o-phone Records. Now I have read the 'Phonoscope', the American periodical of 1896 to 1900, in which Jones's two trips to England and Europe are mentioned, and his visits are there described as in the interest of the Vitaphone Disk records. How the Zonophone connection has arisen I have no knowledge, in fact, Prescott, overseas himself from New York, was on a European visit on behalf of his own export business and his Zon-o-phone suppliers in America. Both men were considered to be attempting to set up European Agencies for their respective brands of records and machines."

"I also made mention of Edison Bell earlier. 'Tin Foil to Stereo', has the founding of this enterprise in the wrong year and also has wrong the names of the founders of the company."

"Well, aren't you going to give the facts in these matters now?"

"No, as I intend to include those points elsewhere at another time."

"You haven't told me much today, have you?"

"No, that is the way it is. I told you I did not know who first used wax for making disc records for general sale. Perhaps you would care to go to the U.S.A. and try some industrial archaeology for yourself?" I prompted.

"Thank you, no," he replied, "I have to make for home right now!"

"Cheerio, then. I wonder what wonderful gems of recorded art I have missed whilst talking to you this afternoon?" I asked in farewell.

Frank Andrews

## THE EARLIEST ROYAL RECORDS

Frank Andrews

Of late, I have submitted a number of articles to "The Hillandale News" with reference to Queen Victoria's recording which was addressed to Menelik, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and it was only towards the end of August, 1976, that, through the good offices of Mr. Chew of the Science Museum, London, I was informed that there was a recording extant, made by Emperor Menelik, in reply to Queen Victoria's message.

As you will have read, the Society was given permission by Professor Edward Ullendorff, of the University of London, to republish the original article dealing with the Emperor's recording, which was contained in a 1969 issue of his department's "Bulletins".

Two years afterwards, the question of the earliest Royal recordings was raised in response to an item published in "The Times Diary", over the initials of the diarist, "P.H.S.", of date, Friday, May 21st, 1971, which reads: "King's Record: King Husain of Jordan has made a record, surely the first reigning monarch to cut a disc. But anyone expecting to see his name entering the top selling charts will be disappointed. The record 'Jerusalem in Captivity' is in the form of a personal message from the king appealing to his listeners to heed the 'plight' of the Holy City. No rock beat, no heavenly choirs in the background.

The idea of making a record, I understand, came from the king himself. He recorded his message on tape and gave it to the Jordanian ambassador to London, Zaid Rifai, to take to Britain



to be made into a record.

Some 35,000 copies have been produced, of which about 31,000 have been sent to all Christian clergymen in Britain. The rest have been forwarded to Cabinet Ministers, M.Ps, embassies and newspapers.

Some of the impact has been lost, however, as the record was meant to be an 'Easter Message' to Christians, but, because of production difficulties, it was only ready about 10 days ago." P.H.S.

*(The above is reproduced from "The Times", by permission granted 2/9/76).*

One quickly notes the contradiction in the above article where the King of Jordan is, at first, stated to have "cut a disc" — very unlikely in 1971! — and then, secondly, and more correctly, the recording is described as a tape recording, which was then made up into a disc, which has been the normal practice of making disc records for the last quarter of a century or so.

The article drew a letter from a Mr. Roger Fulford, published in "The Times" on May 25th, 1971, which said: "Sir, P.H.S. in his column on May 21 wonders if the King of Jordan is the first reigning monarch to make use of a disc to record a message. Queen Victoria did this 73 years ago. In 1898 she sent a long message by phonograph record to the King of Kings, the Emperor Menelek of Abyssinia. This was sent to Addis Ababa where it was played over to the King. He received it with ceremony, stood while it was being played and ordered his artillery to fire a 'Feu de joie' at the finish.

Unfortunately the disc of the recording stylus was broken, en route, so it was many months before he was able to record his reply to the Queen. When it arrived the Queen received it less ceremoniously than had the King, merely remarking at the end, 'it is very curious'."

When Mr. Fulford refers to a disc at the beginning of his letter, he has misconstrued P.H.S.'s contradictory article, accepting that the King of Jordan used a disc to record a message, and not tape. That Queen Victoria was recorded BY a disc (the diaphragm), is correct, that she recorded on to a disc would be incorrect, but Mr. Fulford rightly infers the former. Mr. Fulford was wrong in stating Queen Victoria's message was a long one.

Mr. Fulford's letter was commented upon by Professor Edward Ullendorff in his letter to "The Times", published May 31st. But he too confuses the type of recording. He writes: "Sir, Mr. Roger Fulford is, of course, quite right about the first royal disc. Queen Victoria's 1898 phonograph message (a very brief one of 4½ printed lines of purely conventional greetings) to the Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia was received with great awe in Ethiopia, but the Queen's recording was, on her express instructions, destroyed shortly after its delivery.

Fortunately, the cylinder bearing the reply by Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu, has been preserved in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Not only are these the only recordings of the Imperial voices known to be extant, but the detailed messages (dealing with some delicate political matters as well) contain a most valuable early specimen of spoken Amharic.

The decipherment and transcription of the Imperial replies proved to be uncommonly difficult, as the recording had greatly deteriorated in the long interval, but thanks to the patience and acumen of my colleague, Professor Abraham Demoz of Addis Ababa University, and to the helpfulness of the Windsor Castle Librarian, a satisfactory text was established and published in the 1969 issue of the 'Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.'

A tape recording of the Menelik-Taitu messages was handed, in 1969, to the Emperor Haile Selassie and to the Crown Prince. The Ethiopian press was not slow to observe that, in this way, the voices of the late Imperial couple were heard again in Ethiopia after an interval of close on 60 years."



My grateful thanks are due to both Mr. R. Fulford and Professor Ullendorff for their permission to quote their letters in full.

It was through the aegis of Mr. Chew at the Science Museum, London, that it was possible to procure a tape recorded copy of the phonograph cylinder.

The question is — is the Royal Ethiopian record the earliest 'Royal recording' still extant? Did any of the following wax cylinders survive, which had been recorded before May 1893, by the Edison Phonograph Company or the Edison United Phonograph Company in London, or Edison phonographs elsewhere?

- (1) His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales.
- (2) Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales.
- (3) The Emperor of Germany.
- (4) The Emperor of Russia.
- (5) The King and Queen of Sweden.
- (6) The King of Saxony.
- (7) Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Teck.
- (8) Her Royal Highness the Princess May of Cambridge.

The authority for the fact of the above recordings is "The Phonogram" of May 1893, published from Jonathan Lewis Young's address at Fore Street, London, E.C. where Mr. Young was in business with phonographs, which business was in infringement of the "Edison Bell" establishment's monopoly patent rights in phonographs. Mr. Young had been the general manager for the Edison Phonograph and the Edison United Phonograph Companies in London, at the time when the above Royal personages made their records. Some recordings of this period became the property of "Edison Bell". What happened to them?

## THE LAST REPORT DISCOVERED OF A PRE-WAR SOCIETY MEETING, AND OUR BEGINNINGS

By Frank Andrews

Over the past few years I have been submitting copies of the reports of our Society's meetings which, from inception in 1919, appeared in a number of the trade periodicals extant at the time of the meetings. The Society had no magazine of its own, and these reports, as you have read from the pages of recent issues of the "Hillandale News", were invariably composed and signed by Mr. Felix Sykes, as Recording Secretary of the Society. Mr. Felix Sykes was the brother of the first of the three Honorary Presidents of our Society, Mr. Adrian Sykes, who accepted the position only after Thomas A. Edison declined the honour.

It is possible that reports appeared in the pages of "The Gramophone" with the founding of that magazine in 1923, but as I do not have easy access to past issues I have not been able to investigate the probability.

My last reproduced meeting report was for March 1931, published in last June's issue of "The Hillandale News", a meeting which took place eighteen months after Thomas A. Edison, Ltd. ceased supplying phonographic products.

It is almost certain, in my opinion, that the membership of the Society in those days was in no wise concerned in the historical aspect of their interest, except for the odd member, but that it was, like the disc societies, interested in the then current endeavour of achieving the utmost fidelity from machines and recordings, which had been the goal of all interested in recordings from the first public issues decades earlier. With no phonographic supplies of new and improving material, the Society was left floundering, — its "raison d'être" had been sabotaged, meetings could now only demonstrate old machines and old recordings, which became the more ancient as the years rolled by, or else, to maintain a contemporary image, the inclusion of the disc record, with



its lateral cut, would have to be made a part of the proceedings.

The March 1931 meeting had been the demonstration of the Kingston Home recording machine, which used discs.

The September 1931 report, the last I have been able to discover, was as follows:—

**"THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND RADIO SOCIETY.**

"The opening meeting of the Season was held on September 16th at the Food Reform Restaurant, Fumival Street, Holborn. A programme of records, by courtesy of the Parlophone Company, provided a very enjoyable entertainment.

"The Secretary stated that, in future, the activities of the Society would embrace musical reproduction in its entirety, and arrangements had been made with well-known manufacturers to give Gramophone and Radio-Gramophone recitals, with demonstrations of apparatus.

"The Society will welcome new members. Subscription 5s. per annum. (Unsigned)."

That report I take as the official closing of the first chapter in the story of our Society. The second chapter will concern the years following, up to the outbreak of the second world war. Who knows anything about that period? There are no reports in "The Sound Wave".

The third chapter will deal with the reformation of the Society after the war. Who knows about that? And the fourth chapter begins with the launching of the "Hillandale News", when the Society took on responsibilities of an international character, which chapter is the present time.

**THE OPENING GAMBITS IN THE FORMATION OF OUR SOCIETY.**

I have covered the first meetings of our Society in past issues of "The Hillandale News". I have since researched the opening moves into the founding and here is what I have discovered, remembering that, at the time, Edison products, which included the Blue Amberols, were prohibited as imports by the British Government although the prohibition was expected to be lifted in the immediate future.

From 'Edisonite' to the Editor of 'The Talking Machine News', published March 1919.

"Dear Sir,— Why not a London Edison Society? No doubt, in the near future, shipments will be arriving of Edison Blue Amberols, Royal Purple Amberols, and, possibly, the long-looked for Edison discs, or — as the Edison Company terms them — 'Re-creations'.

"Many years' connection with the Talking Machine Society movement has convinced the writer of the many advantages derived from being a member of a Phonograph Society. The following is only one instance, but it is perhaps not only worth citing, but in itself a good reason for becoming a member of such a Society, viz., the opportunity given of hearing the latest and best in records, machines and accessories. Such a reason is vastly more important to those enamoured with the products of the Edison Company than to the lateral-cut disc enthusiast, Edison dealers being few and far between.

"Quite a number of Edison enthusiasts, personally known to the writer, are very keen on forming a London Edison Society, and would therefore like to hear from anybody who is interested in such a movement."

'Edisonite' then enumerated the preliminary proposals, but I will give these at the end of the next letter as they were included there also.

The following letter was also published in March 1919, and was addressed to the Editor of "The Sound Wave."

"43 Baalbee Road, N.5. February 3rd, 1919.

"Dear Sir,— Manchester can boast of an Edison Society, and an exceptionally successful society it is, too, judging from the number of its members and their unabated enthusiasm. Why should the capital of these Isles lag behind the famous Lancashire city? 'Three Edisonites' would like to know and would like to meet other Edisonites piqued with a similar touch of curiosity and fired with a desire to remedy such a state of affairs.

"Assuming that this letter will draw sufficient response to warrant the formation of an Edison Society, the above referred to 'Three Edisonites' would like to make the following preliminary proposals:—

"(1) That the suggested new Society be called 'The London Edison Society'.

"(2) That the headquarters be central as possible (i.e., E.C. or W.C.) so as to draw Edison enthusiasts



from all parts of the Metropolis.

“(3) That meetings be held on the first Saturday in each month, or on a Wednesday or Thursday, so as not to clash with the meetings of the existing London Gramophone, etc. societies, and commence at 7 p.m. sharp.

“(4) That the annual subscription be 5s., and that the rules — so far as they can be made to apply to an Edison Society — be the same as those printed in extenso in that excellent article which appeared in the January edition of ‘The Sound Wave’ entitled ‘The Evolution of the Society’.

“Trusting you will be so good as to publish this, We are, dear sir, yours truly, Three Edisonites.

“P.S. — Will those interested please communicate, in the first onset, with Mr. J. W. Crawley, 27, Horsham Avenue, N.12?”

An editor's commentary went:—

“(We cordially commend the formation of a Central London Edison Society, and trust that it will mature. The more societies the better, as we know of no better medium of inter-communication between talking-machine devotees than the Society. Our correspondent will notice that in the current issue we have allocated a special column for Society movements, and any further communications anent same should be addressed to ‘Pertinax’... Ed.)”

Another letter, published like the first in the ‘Talking Machine News’ of March, reveals the unsatisfactory circumstances under which Edison enthusiasts found themselves as regards Edison products. From a Mr. W. Sanders of 92, Russell Street, Moss Side, Manchester: ‘The Future of the Cylinder’.

“Dear Sir,— With the end of the war practically assured, the makers and users of talking machines in the British Isles will be forming their plans and turning their thoughts to the future.

“On account of its great popularity, the disc machine is sure to attract fresh capital, and new developments will follow in due course. Even as it is, a magnificent choice of records and titles is now at the disposal of the discite, who may well ‘lick his chops’ at the bountiful fare contained in an ‘H.M.V.’ or Columbia catalogue, — to name no others.

“But the cylinder enthusiast (the Cinderella or poor relation of the talking machine family) — how fares he or she? I think the position may be summed up as follows, unless a pleasant surprise awaits us.

“First. No type of wax record will satisfy again.

“Second. We are therefore dependent upon the Blue Amberol, which is no longer produced here, and which (for an indefinite period) is not permitted to be imported.

“Third. Even when free from the latter restrictions, the Blue Amberol will remain an American product with American artists and selections, and the British user must reconcile himself to snapping up such crumbs as may fall from the rich Yankee cylinder-user's table.

“First-class Blues are now ‘non est’. They have gone in search of the elusive egg and the vanishing bunny (rabbit - F.A.) which fled at the approach of the Food Controller.

“Now, I think we can safely assume that with the closing of the Willesden factory the Edison people abandoned any serious idea of catering for the British public in the future. I have seen a fairly modern list of Blues, and the lover of band records, of grand opera and high-class comic operas, and records of English ballads will only find scraps of these types therein.

“We cannot live on past titles, even when procurable. At the risk of being prosecuted for blasphemy by Edison worshippers, I record my opinion that there are hundreds of Blue Amberols not one of which is worth a Blue-mould.

“Is it not practicable to induce the Edison firm to dispose of their patent rights in this country so that we could have a British organisation producing Blues with artists, bands and titles to suit the British palate?

(Messrs. T.A. Edison, Ltd. were still a British extant company — F.A.).

“I am hopeful such a scheme would be a financial success. There are thousands of cylinder enthusiasts in the kingdom, and if their machines could be adapted at a moderate cost, they would flock to the support of the Blue Amberol produced under the conditions I have named.

“I am purely an amateur without technical knowledge or trade interests, and my conclusions and



suggestions may prove to be mistaken. The opinions, therefore, of more experienced readers (of whom Mr. Seymour is a type) would be of real interest.

"In any case, the present stalemate is regrettable, and even the end of war restrictions will not remove the shortcoming which I have emphasised, viz., the fact that the Edison user in this country will only be catered for as a 'side line' and without due regard for our national tastes and desires."

Such was the situation when the formation of our Society was being mooted!

Mr. Sanders' letter was remarked upon in another letter published in the April edition of 'The Talking Machine News' by Mr. C.R.W. Miles, who became one of the first officers of our Society. From 1 Portland Villas, East Heath Road, Hampstead, N.W.3, he wrote:—

"Sir,—Mr. Sanders' letter on the Future of the Cylinder is, unhappily, only too true. The devotees of the cylinder are, indeed, in a bad way, but I think I am right in saying that the Edison Company do not intend to altogether desert the British enthusiast, and may, in due course, set up again on our side.

"I have been asked to join the committee of the proposed London Edison Society referred to in the March issue, and we are out to achieve all we can for cylinder users, of whom, as Mr. Sanders says, there are thousands.

"Several enthusiasts besides myself have written from time to time complaining of the trash we get on Blues, and our watchword will be 'British artists and good music for British people', and it is for this reason that I venture to ask (for) support for the London Edison Society.

"I am, yours truly, C.R.W. Miles."

April's issue of 'The Sound Wave' contained the first of the pages devoted to 'Talking Machine Society Gossip' by 'Pertinax', and Mr. C.R.W. Miles was featured under the heading 'A Voice from Hampstead', which informed:—

"Mr. C.R.W. Miles, well known as an old Edisonian enthusiast, congratulates the Editor on the new feature of the Societies' column. 'All enthusiasts', he writes, 'should, if possible, join societies, or, if they have not one available to belong to, try to form one. The latest recruit is the proposed London Edison Society, referred to in the correspondence of your March number. I hope to be able to act on the committee, and we shall adopt a progressive policy — better music, British bands, artists, songs, and generally further the interest of cylinder users all over the country. I should not advise anyone who possesses 'O' Repros, Cygnet, and good machines to part with them, as we have every reason to hope for better things to come. One new feature now being introduced on the 'Blues' in America is the whole uncut version of selections like Overtures, etc., complete on two or more cylinders."

'Pertinax' continued with,— "Mr. J.W. Crawley (Finchley) writes:— 'I was very much interested in reading your excellent column in the March 'Sound Wave' and consider we Society people are fortunate in having an expert to look after our interests. With regard to the London Edison Society, you will no doubt be interested to learn that more than a score of gentlemen have promised to join, so there is no doubt the Society will be formed in due course. Further particulars later'."

'Pertinax', this same April, published a letter from Mr. Stevens of the Edison company which said,— "No announcement has reached us from the British Government relative to the removal or modifications of the prohibition governing the importation of Blue Amberol records into Great Britain, but now that the war is over and things are beginning to move toward normal again, we are hopeful that this information may reach us at any time. You may be assured that as soon as the way is clear, no time will be lost in making shipments to our dealers."

Mr. Edison, himself in his 73rd year, was reported to have consented to make a disc record of his own voice, which was to be a monologue, with the reverse having "The Star Spangled Banner" and the National Anthems of the Allies.

The support for the formation of our Society was increasing, in spite of the lack of machines and records. The May 1919 'Talking Machine Society Gossip' page in 'The Sound Wave', edited by 'Pertinax', commenced with:—"The Blues! — The suggestion of an Edison Society for London is meeting with approval from all quarters, so it seems. A letter from Mr. A.C. Harwood, of 371 London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, has



been handed to me by the Editor, and here it is:— 'Dear Sir,—The idea mooted in your last issue by 'Three Edisonites' for the formation of an all Edison Society, with headquarters in the W.C. or E.C. districts, is most excellent, as there must be many enthusiasts of this cult of sound-reproduction who would welcome with open arms, so to speak, an opportunity for exchange of views and the smoothing away of little difficulties that are bound to arise. Any assistance within my power I shall be happy to give, and I trust the day will not be far distant when the new Society will be able to hold its first meeting; in fact I am already looking forward to a very pleasant First Night and a demonstration of fine 'Blues'."

The next item from 'Pertinax' was:— "LONDON EDISON SOCIETY".

"Mr. W.J. Crawley writes that the above Society has been formed, and that the first general meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 28th, at 7 p.m. at 'The Clachan', Mitre Court, Fleet Street, E.C. All cylinderites are cordially invited, and some new 'Royal Purple' Amberols will be demonstrated."

But the new 'Royal Purples' had already been demonstrated at the North London P. & G. Society's meeting in April, as reported in the next paragraphs by 'Pertinax'.

"I hear there was something like serious disappointment at the April meeting of the North London Society, when half a dozen of the latest recordings of the Edison house were reproduced for the first time. We have been told for some months that we might expect some wonderful improvements in the Edison cylinder product when the Government restrictions on imports were removed. I am not aware that these import restrictions have as yet been removed, but someone has evidently been 'smuggling', and the North London Society is to be congratulated again in being first in the field, regulations or no regulations."

(Let me remind you that Henry Seymour was the Hon. President of the North London P. & G. Society. — F.A.).

"The general opinion of these new examples of recording was that they were inferior to the old. There is great wisdom in letting well alone, but in this age of emulation each is striving for something different and very often worse. The Edison record stood alone as an example of finesse and delicacy, in contra-distinction to the ordinary disc record which crowds out this very delicacy by its greater robustness. So in the attempt to get an excessive depth of tone in the new cylinders, we lose the wonderful sibilants which made the Edison product the envy of all other recording 'experts'. I am afraid they have been recorded with too large a diaphragm, that's all."

Mr. A.C. Harwood, of Westcliff-on-Sea, also had a letter, dated April 2nd, 1919, published in the May issue of 'The Talking Machine News' which read:—

"Dear Sir,—As a recent devotee at the shrine of the 'Blues', in spite of the many difficulties encountered in pursuance of this delightful means of sound reproduction, I trust that soon the veil will be lifted, giving us a glimpse into the delights to come from the land of 'Orange'. Therefore I most heartily welcome the suggestion of 'Edisonite' for the formation of an all-Edison Society with central headquarters in the W.C. or E.C. districts. I know that in this part of the world there are many enthusiasts, whom I trust will rally to the call, and incidentally make pleasant company on the homeward journey after a demonstration of the 'Blues'."

Mr. J.W. Crawley also wrote to 'The Talking Machine News', of date April 23rd. Said he, "Dear Sir,—(1) With reference to the various letters which have appeared in your columns regarding the formation of a London Edison Society, I have pleasure in advising you that the response from Edison enthusiasts has been so encouraging that the London Edison Society is now an accomplished fact. The Society starts its career with a membership of thirty, and the first general meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, May 28th, at 'Clachan', Mitre Court, Fleet Street, E.C. at 7 o'clock.

"(2) A hearty invitation is extended to all interested to attend the first meeting when it is hoped we shall be able to demonstrate some new 'Royal Purples' and 'Blue Amberol' records. Further particulars of the Society will be gladly furnished by the undersigned."

'Pertinax' of the 'Sound Wave' attended the first meeting of our Society and wrote in his columns of the June issue of his periodical:—

"THE NEW EDISON SOCIETY — The new society started off in good form, about fifty enthusiasts being present during the evening, as far as I was able to keep count between sundry glasses of the best beer



I have tasted since the Government ale took the place of the apothecary.

"The chairman, Mr. N.F. Hillyer (who, I hear, is still remaining as active as ever as secretary to the North London Society) introduced some specimens of the new Purple Amberols, the latest product of the Edison Laboratory, which were really better than I expected them to be, judging from their previous reception at the North London. Of course everyone knows that the North London is exceptionally critical on fine points, but I think that the new records bear comparison with the old, at least. Possibly a different machine makes a difference. Anyhow, after one or two amendments had been put, but lost, the rules, as drafted, were carried, and future meetings are to be held at the Food Reform Restaurant, Furnival Street, E;C."

With this report of the first meeting of our Society came:—"Those Import Restrictions — It is gratifying to learn that the import restrictions for talking machines, etc., have at last been removed, although nothing has yet been said about abolishing Tax Reform. The duty of 33 per cent. will be a serious barrier on Edison goods, which are being awaited with much anticipated pleasure by a considerable section of the British public. The 'Blue Amberols' are likely to have a new 'boom', and Edison discs are also in good command."

Subsequent meetings of our Society have already been covered by me in recent past issues of "The Hillandale News", and this now closes my project of tracing the history of the early days of the Society.

## CORRESPONDENCE

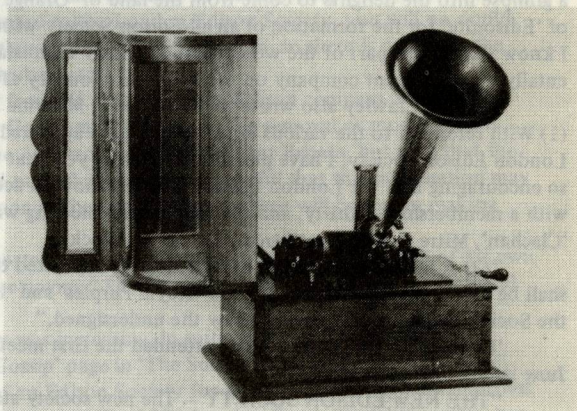
Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8AB.

Please find enclosed details of two recent publications that you may care to include in "Hillandale News" should space permit.

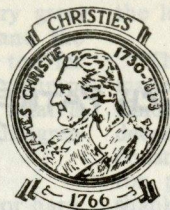
Wendell Moore, a U.S.A. collector, is reprinting his complete set of the "Edison Phonograph Monthly". As you may be aware these Edison house magazines are most rare. Even the British Museum does not hold a complete set of the British issues. Therefore this is a unique opportunity. Not many British collectors have had this information circulated to them. Those collectors that I have shown volume one to seem most interested. Mr. Moore has to sell a few hundred copies in order for him to continue on with the publication of volume two. Therefore if details are circulated through H. & D. News no doubt Mr. Moore will receive further orders.

Best wishes, John S. Dales.

An early Penny-in-slot Edison phonograph, using the Standard mechanism of 1898 - 1900 included in the sale at Christie's, South Kensington, on December 22nd, 1976.







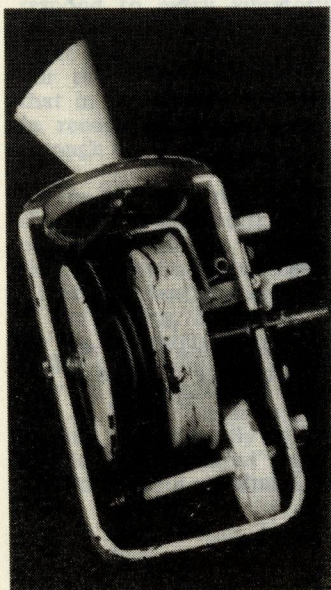
# Christie's

## South Kensington

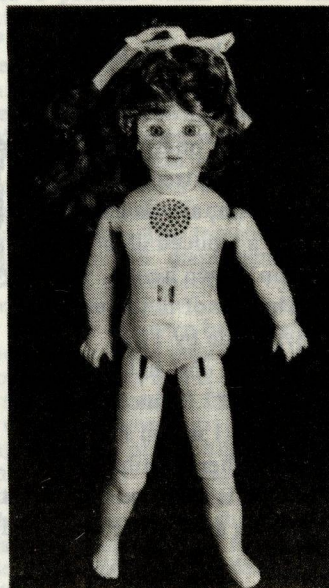
London SW7 3JS. Tel: [REDACTED]

**CHRISTIE'S FOR CHRISTMAS**

**MECHANICAL MUSIC SALE on Wednesday December 22nd at 2 p.m.**



Including this Edison phonograph doll (the left-hand picture shows the mechanism), an early Edison Standard-based coin-in-slot phonograph, an Edison-Bell Elf phonograph, a Columbia AB with 5-inch mandrel, an Edward VII Commemoration record, an HMV 460 (Pleated Diaphragm) gramophone and many other tempting Christmas presents for the collector.



Catalogues 85p post paid from above address



## REVIEW

I have been asked to review a painting book entitled "The Coloring Book of Vintage Phonographs" (For all ages — as stated on the cover).

It contains fourteen pages of machines and labels with a suggested description of the colours to use.

This is a joint effort by two of our American members, T.C. Fabrizio and M.S. Kaplan.

Basically the idea is excellent, but fails in my opinion by the rather crude manner of its execution. The quality of artwork is extremely amateurish, as you can see by a reduced illustration shown here.

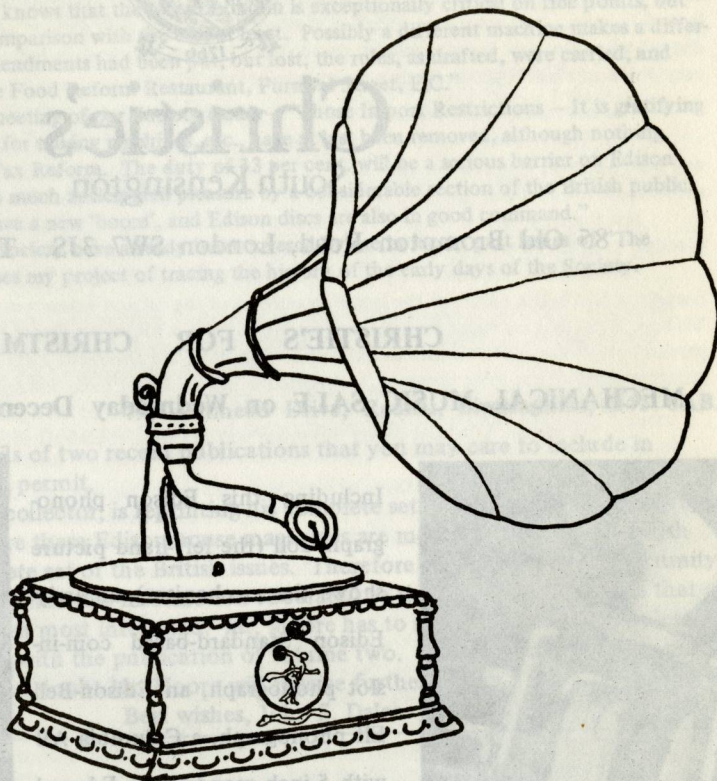
The size of the book is 8½" wide by 11" deep. The cost in Great Britain is £2.00 including postage. (I would say this is rather prohibitive for what it is and would do better if it were somewhere around the 30p. mark).

If you are further interested, would you contact:

T. C. Fabrizio,  
"Musique",

██████████  
Rochester N.Y. 14611,  
U.S.A.

## 6. FRENCH PATHÉ DISC PHONOGRAPH 1910



SUGGESTION: COLOR THE CASE RICH, RED MAHOGANY WITH A BLUE EMBLEM — GREEN FELT TURNTABLE — SILVER AND BLACK HARDWARE — AND LIGHT BLUE HORN.

+++++



To make a "record" at home, a very great deal depends on the recorder used and the nice adjustment. If the recorder lays too far over the axis of the cylinder it is apt to jump, and the consequence of that will be what is known as a "blasting" or a rough and disagreeable reproduction.

For the mellow sounds of a violin or harp, guitar or banjo, the best material of which the diaphragm should be composed is, unquestionably, mica. But for brass instruments or robust vocal efforts glass is the thing. I have spoken into the tube with a mica-diaphragm recorder of my own construction attached, and so exceedingly sensitive it has proved that every word has been successively duplicated on the wax cylinder, with the result that the first echo has been as loud and strong as the original speech.

If it is desirable to produce a loud and strong record, it is absolutely necessary to keep in mind two things: one, that the diaphragm should be sufficiently sensitive to respond to every vibratory impulse sent towards it, and to give enough freedom of movement to allow the sapphire cutter to gouge out the indentions deep and full; the other, that in doing this it shall not be too sensitive to recoil, as it were, and jump the cylinder through the force employed to so vibrate it.

The most perfect record is that which shows, on inspection, a deep cutting, but one which shows a furrow running around the wax cylinder without interruption. The vibratory indentions should appear in the furrow of the scoring. If you discover the indentions to be separately marked, between which is visible the untouched surface of the wax, you may at once conclude that the record will be full of "blast." It is thus necessary, not only to use a sufficiently stiff diaphragm, but it should be "weighted" somewhat in order to keep the recorder well down to its work.

Too much weight, however, is another difficulty, which must be left to the ingenuity of the operator to determine. Too much weight means too much resistance, and this will prevent the free play of the diaphragm, so that no satisfactory result will be obtained in reproduction. The determination of all these details is almost a matter of mathematical calculation, and that is the reason why the amateur finds it so difficult to obtain results in record-making anything approaching those manufactured by

the leading firms.

There is no doubt that the best records are made in acoustic chambers, but these contrivances are not indispensable to produce a really decent record. Much more depends upon the construction of the recorder. All recorders sold for popular use are made with a moveable shank to allow for the varying movements of the cylinder-blank. No matter how true the wax is turned, the mandril which carries it is sure to "wobble" a little, and it is that little which causes most of the trouble.

Edison records are made by an altogether different process, and that is why they are so far superior to any others on the market. I say "by a different process" not because I know it for a positive fact — for the process is a well-kept secret — but because I have been informed that he employs a new process; and in making a large number of experiments myself I have discovered what the essentials are, and find that his records answer in the most precise degree to a process which I have not only thought out but worked out.

The principle is to shave the **blank** on the machine on which the record is to be made. Then adjust the recorder perfectly, and afterwards fix it rigidly. There is then no possibility of "blast", the recorder is held closely to its work without being weighted for that purpose, and the result is as near perfection as one can reasonably expect to attain. The tension which weighting produced on the diaphragm, and which prevents its free movement, is by this means done away with, and the vibratory effect is at least twice as great. My own best machine is a French type, and is made adjustable in all its parts. For experimentalists this is undoubtedly the best form. But the next best type of machine upon which to work out this problem of recording is either of the higher-priced machines of the National Phonograph Company. The motor must be sufficiently strong to permit of the cylinders being shaved, and it is a comparatively easy matter to fix the diaphragm frame of the Edison recorders which are sold with those machines.

The genuine Edison moulded records may be obtained at Lupson's, Essex Road, advertised herein, and I am informed that he has just received a large consignment direct from the States. I am not aware that these records are procurable elsewhere in North London. Now's the opportunity to make a selection for the Christmas holidays.

H.S.



# KICK OFF

IN  
1977

WITH

## The EDISON PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY

VOLUMES 1&2

details

from:-

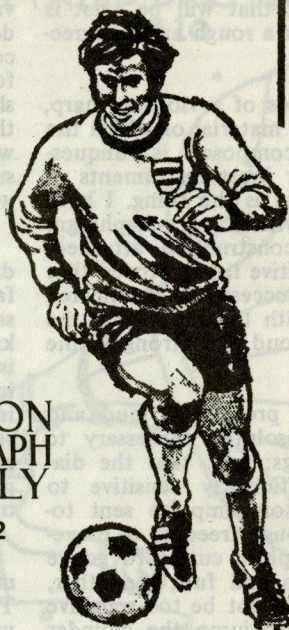
Wendell Moore, [REDACTED]  
Jeffersonville, Indiana 47130. USA

Ernie Bayly, [REDACTED]  
Bournemouth BH6 4JA, England.

Tony Savery, [REDACTED]  
Reservoir, Victoria 3073, Australia

'Only Yesterday'  
Jan Hendrikstraat [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Holland.

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